

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

Further inquiries: (716) 843-5814

138 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

PRESS RELEASE

March 8, 2006

RE: UNITED STATES v. STEVEN MARKLE

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter announced that Steven Markle, age 44, of Niagara Falls, New York, a member of and former union steward for Laborers Local 91, was sentenced on March 7, 2006 for his role in a violent attack upon tilersettters working at the construction of the Wegman's Supermarket in 1998. The sentence, imposed by Chief United States District Judge Richard J. Arcara, requires Markle to serve a term of imprisonment of fifty-seven (57) months, followed by a term of supervised release of two years. The Court also Ordered Markle to pay restitution to the employer of the tilersettters in an amount up to \$20,000.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys William J. Hochul, Jr. and Brett A. Harvey, who are handling the case, stated that the sentence was imposed as a result of an earlier trial at which Markle, along with codefendant Anthony Cerrone, were convicted of attempted extortion of the tilersettters for having participated in the Wegman's attack.

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Hochul stated that the prosecution of Markle, along with the other members of Local 91 convicted to date, was a result of a lengthy criminal investigation conducted by several federal and local agencies into the activities of

Laborers International Union of America, Local 91 (hereinafter "Local 91"), based in Niagara Falls, New York. According to an Indictment returned in the investigation, certain Local 91 members, including the former management of Local 91, engaged in repeated acts of extortion at a number of construction projects in Niagara County, New York, over at least a six year period of time. It should be noted that the fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime . . . is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. **(Disciplinary Rule 7-107(B)(6))**. To date, seven Local 91 members have been convicted of racketeering conspiracy, two Local 91 members (Markle and Cerrone) were convicted after a jury trial of extortion, two other defendants were convicted of attempted destruction of an Alliant Food Service truck, and another defendant was acquitted of trying to destroy the Alliant truck. The former head of Local 91, Michael "Butch" Quarcini, meanwhile, passed away while charges were pending against him, and another Local 91 member pleaded guilty to perjury in connection with the continuing investigation.

The plea was the culmination of a joint investigation on the part of the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Gordon Hedel, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter Ahearn, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Thomas Beilein, and the Niagara Falls Police Department, under the direction of Superintendent John Chella. The investigation underlying the initial Indictment was conducted by these same agencies, along with the assistance of the York State Police, under the direction of Major Michael Manning.